

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 15056

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, RP

SUBJECT: PURGE EXPURGATED

1. PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 24 CREATION OF THREE-MAN PANEL HEADED BY JUSTICE UNDERSECRETARY MACARAIG TO REVIEW ALL CASES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES DISMISSED SEPTEMBER 19 EXCEPT PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES AND TO TAKE COGNIZANCE OF PETITIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION SO THAT NO INJUSTICE IS COMMITTED IN CONNECTION WITH CLEAN UP OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT MACHINERY. PRESS ACCOUNTS OF PANEL CREATION NOTE PRESIDENT ACTED IN WAKE OF REPORTS THAT COMPUTERIZED PURGE LIST CONTAINED INJUSTICES, AND COMPLAINTS BY PURGEES THAT THEY SUBJECT OF INJUSTICES BY HIGHER-UPS. CREATION OF PANEL RUMORED EARLIER.

2. PRESIDENT HAS APPARENTLY ALSO DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH QUOTE PURGE UNQUOTE OF MILITARY BUT PRIMARILY THROUGH RETIREMENT MECHANISM. HE HAS TOLD NUMBER OF VISITING JOURNALISTS HE WILL COMPLETE SO-CALLED MILITARY PURGE BY END OF YEAR BY RETIRING UP TO 12 OVERSTAYING GENERALS AND LARGER NUMBER OF LESSER RANKED OVERSTAYING OFFICERS. ALTHOUGH HE HAS SAID HE WILL MAKE SURE THE MILITARY QUOTE PURGE UNQUOTE IS DONE RIGHT, HE WILL LEAVE IT UP TO MILITARY TO CARRY OUT. HE ALSO HAS
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INDICATED PLANS TO PURGE CORRUPTED MILITARY BUT WILL

LEAVE JOB TO DEFENSE SECRETARY AND CHIEF OF STAFF.
NAMES OF GENERALS TOUTED FOR RETIRMENT SO FAR OMIT
THE MORE NOTORIOUS OFFICERS INCLUDING THE CHIEF OF
STAFF.

3. PRESIDENT HAS ALSO REITERATED HIS INTENTION OF
CONTINUING WITH QUOTE PURGE UNQUOTE OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT. INDICATIONS, HOWEVER, STILL POINT TO VERY
LIMITED ACTION CONSISTING OF RETIRMENT OF
SMALL NUMBER OF OLDER OFFICIALS AND POSSIBLY GREATER
NUMBER OF LESSER OFFICIALS.

4. COMMENT: PUBLIC REHABILITATION OF MILITARY IMAGE
WAS SIGNED IN DEFENSE SECRETARY SPEECH OCTOBER 19
IN WHICH HE SAID PROGRESS OF NEW SOCIETY DUE TO
MILITARY; MILITARY ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF MINOR PECCADILLOS
THAT ADMITTEDLY EXISTED. JUST ANNOUNCED DECISION TO
RETURN TO MILITARY TRIBUNALS SEVERAL OFFENSES OSTENTA-
TIOUSLY TRANSFERRED TO CIVIL COURTS ONLY YEAR AGO
(REPORTED SEPTTEL) ADDS TO IMPRESSION MILITARY HAVE
BEEN REHABILITATED. ALTHOUGH RETIREMENT OF NUMBER OF
SENIOR OFFICERS BY END OF YEAR MAY DELUDE SOME THAT
MILITARY ARE NEVERTHELESS BEING PURGED, MORE CAREFUL
OBSERVERS WILL NOTE THAT MILITARY HAVE COME THROUGH
LARGELY UNSCATHED AND, PROBABLY, UNREFORMED. IF
QUOTE PURGE UNQUOTE OF MILITARY IS IN FACT RESTRICTED TO
TOKENISM, MILITARY MAY BE SEEN TO HAVE EMERGED EVEN
STRONGER AFTER PURGE ACTION EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE
REPUTEDLY INITIALLY INTENDED TARGET OF PURGE AND EVEN
THOUGH, AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, PUBLIC CONCERN
AT MILITARY MISBEHAVIOUR IS FAIRLY WIDESPREAD.

5. MODERATING PURGE OF MILITARY, AND OF LESSER
OFFICIALS, PRESERVES THEIR LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT, AND
SERVES TO DAMPEN ALARMING SHOCK WAVES THAT REVERBERATED
AMONG POWER CIRCLES FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER 19 ANNOUNCEMENT.
BY OPENING UP POSITIONS FOR YOUNGER OFFICERS THROUGH
RETIREMENT ROUTE, MARCOS WILL IN FACT STRENGTHEN
RELATIONSHIP WITH MILITARY. IN THAT SENSE, TONING DOWN
OF PURGE IS GOOD TACTICAL MANEUVER OF MARCOS VINTAGE.
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WHILE THIS TEMPERING ACTION MIGHT SEEM TO RISK DESTROY-
ING CREDIBILITY OF PURGE, IT IS FACT THAT THE SMALL
FILIPINO STILL SEEMS TO REGARD THE PURGE AS A GOOD
LESSON FOR THE HIGH AND MIGHTY. PRESIDENT MAY HAVE
INITIALLY SOUGHT MORE TANGIBLE ACCOMPLISHMENT THAN
CREATION OF IMAGE AMONG THE MASSES BUT IMAGERY
NEVERTHELESS IS IMPORTANT FACTOR IN FILIPINO POLITICAL
LIFE, AND MARCOS CAN CONSEQUENTLY REGARD IMAGE AS

CRONCRETE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENERAL APPLICATION. ON
OTHER HAND, MODULATING OF PURGE HAS SUGGESTED TO SOME
THAT PRESIDENT IS INCREASINGLY
CAPTIVE OF MILITARY AND TO LESSER DEGREE OF OLD
SOCIETY CIRCLES AND MORES. PRESIDENT WOULD NOT BE
HAPPY WITH SUCH A CONCLUSION, BUT HE HAS SHOWN BY
HIS ACTIONS THAT HE EITHER CANNOT OR WILL NOT JEOPARDIZE
HIS HOLD ON THE COUNTRY BY CONDUCTING GENUINE PURGE OF
MILITARY. FAILURE TO ACT AGAINST MILITARY EXCEPT IN
TOKEN WAY WILL CONFIRM PREJUDICES OF HIS OPPOSITIONIST
CRITICS AND RUNS RISK OF DISAPPOINTING THOSE WHO HAVE WISHED
TO GIVE HIS NEW SOCIETY THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT IN
INTERESTS OF NEW, CLEANER ORDER.
SULLIVAN

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